

Crime + Criminals (T.H.) Rumors start after four area deaths

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By BRYAN TAYLOR
Tribune Staff Writer

Within the past two weeks, four suspicious deaths have been reported in Vigo County — and they apparently have resulted in unsubstantiated rumors of other bodies being found in the area.

On the morning of July 5, the bodies of Mary A. Quillen, 28, and Lucinda K. Farmer, 29, both of 619 N. 14th St., were found dead in an alley in the same block where their apartment was located. That case still is under investigation.

A week later, on July 12, fishermen found the body of a woman, tentatively identified as Gloria Hedden, 29, 2209 Crawford St., floating in the Wabash River south of Terre Haute. The body's hands and feet were bound with cable and the body had been weighted with railroad iron, reports indicated.

Just four days after that discovery, the body of George W. Day, 58, West Terre Haute, was found in Day's home. He apparently died of a stroke

brought about by a blow to the head, reports said.

Those four deaths have given rise to rumors of other bodies being found in the Terre Haute area, but officials say none of those rumored bodies have turned up.

Included among the rumors that have filtered to the TRIBUNE are: A body in a trash bin at a truck stop; bodies behind a grocery store and a body in a trash bin at a motel.

"Because of the homicides, people are edgy," Police Chief Gerald Loudermilk said. Rumors start and "spread like wildfire at a time like this," he stated. He said he had heard the grocery store and truck stop rumors.

Many times those types of rumors start when a person hears something on a police radio monitor and he does not hear the full story, Loudermilk stated.

The homicides that really did occur have been keeping police busy.

Assistant Police Chief Thomas Tanoos, head of the department's criminal investigation division, re-

ported some detectives were called off vacations and some have been coming in on their days off to investigate the homicides.

Investigation of the Quillen-Farmer double homicide has found that both women sustained gunshots.

Tanoos said Friday his division still was waiting for reports on tests to determine if either of the women had received sexual contact immediately prior to death.

Some people have taken polygraph (lie detector) tests in connection with that investigation, Tanoos said. No reports on who has taken the tests have been released.

The polygraph also has been used in the investigation of the death of the woman tentatively identified as Gloria Hedden.

A second autopsy on the Hedden body was conducted Thursday morning, but results had not been submitted to investigators as of Friday afternoon, Tanoos said.

Mrs. Hedden was reported missing on July 10 by her husband. She re-

portedly failed to return home after leaving for work on July 8.

Police officials have reported they have no indication the Hedden death is connected to the double homicide.

Also under investigation by area law enforcement authorities is the death of Day. He reportedly died of a stroke brought about by a blow to the head.

According to reports, a blow, which left lacerations, pushed the brain against the skull, causing blood vessels to burst under pressure. Once the vessels burst, Day suffered a massive stroke and died, reports said.

Blood was found in Day's car and it was theorized he may have received the head injury away from home, but drove home and died there.

The following agencies are among those that have had a part in investigating at least one of the questionable deaths: The Terre Haute Police Department, the Vigo County Sheriff's Department, the Indiana State Police, the West Terre Haute Police Department and the Vigo County Coroner's Office.

Five Local Homicide Cases In 1976

6 DEC 3 1 1976

By J. BLAINE AKERS
Star Staff Writer

Five homicide cases, leading to the arrest of 10 persons, were among the top police beat stories reported by The Star during 1976.

Terre Haute city police investigated all but one of the homicides, Vigo County sheriff's deputies probing the shotgun slaying of Martha Jane Collins, 44, West Terre Haute. County authorities arrested the victim's son-in-law, Charles Oricks, 27, West Terre Haute, and charged him with the murder. Oricks was convicted of the murder charge and is currently awaiting sentencing.

A homicide which occurred April 21, 1975 was apparently solved in November of this year when city detectives announced the arrests of three local youths charged with the killing of Charles E. Cody, 52, Terre Haute. Following countless hours of investigation, city law enforcement officers arrested Gene Moses, 20, who since the 1975 murder has been sentenced to 10 to 25 years at the Pendleton Reformatory for robbery; Richard A. Mitchell, 19, 2417 S. 19th St., who late in December was committed to the Indiana Department of Mental Health, and Mark Weathers, 18, 1200 S. 8th St.

The bizarre death of Cody occurred at the Twelve Points Hotel where he resided. Reports said Cody was beaten and robbed of about \$300 and left to die at the stairway leading to his apartment. Cody died two days later at Veterans Hospital, Indianapolis.

Another homicide, involving the death of Russell H. Parks, 68, a Terre Haute lay minister, has been thoroughly investigated by city police, who have submitted their case to the Vigo County prosecutor's office. Arrests are expected to be made once a grand jury convenes to probe the matter.

Parks was found in the back seat of his auto during the morning of March 5 and he died March 11 at Terre Haute Regional Hospital. An initial autopsy revealed Parks had died of natural causes, however approximately five weeks later the death was ruled a homicide by the coroner's office.

Reports indicate Parks suffered a contusion on the right side of his neck and authorities said the injury was probably the result of a rabbit punch or karate chop to the victim's neck. Police said Parks was robbed of a wristwatch, keys, glasses and at least two credit cards. He was found in his auto which had been parked behind a local tavern.

Rick Hyde, 21, Terre Haute, and his younger brother, Jeff, were arrested by city police Aug. 17 and charged with the beating and subsequent death

of 72-year-old Albert Fields, 4320 N. 16th St. Fields died Aug. 18 of injuries suffered in the assault at his home Aug. 15. The victim reportedly suffered a skull fracture as a result of the attack. The case is pending in local courts.

Three arrests were made in the Aug. 24 murder of Ralph Benjamin, 55, a Pinkerton security guard. Benjamin's body was found stuffed in the trunk of his car. Reports said he had been shot in the head. Charged with the Benjamin murder were Sherbert Maurice Fortson, 17; his 15-year-old brother, Stanford Wayne Fortson, both of Terre Haute, and Edward Lewis, 17, Gary. Lewis escaped from the Vigo County jail shortly after his arrest and remains at large.

The most recent homicide occurred Oct. 10 on the city's northside. Joseph M. "Joe Mike" McGlaughlin, 58, Terre Haute, was the victim of a stabbing incident near his Chase Street home. Although McGlaughlin's murderer has not been arrested, city police did arrest Marion D. "Speedy" Baker, 34, 2347 Chase St., who has been charged with compounding a felony. Baker had been interviewed by city detectives and it was reported he could identify the person responsible for the stabbing death if police would pay him for the information.

An area homicide which drew considerable publicity during 1976 was the January murder of

Mrs. Christine Ann Norton, 26, and her four-year-old son, Brett, of Rockville. Convicted of those murders were Donald Keith "Chet" Norton, 26, husband and father of the victims, and Benjamin Paul Woody, 27, Montezuma. Both victims died of stab wounds. It was revealed Norton committed the crime in an attempt to collect on a reported \$600,000 life insurance policy he had on his family.

Jail escapes were more frequent than not in Vigo County this year. Jeffrey Hill, 19, Terre Haute, arrested on various charges, including robbery and aiming a deadly weapon, escaped from the custody of a sheriff's deputy Sept. 28 after a Vigo County Superior Court jury had convicted him. He was apprehended a week later, but then successfully sawed his way out of jail on Nov. 20 with another inmate, Edward Lewis, who was charged with the slaying of Ralph Benjamin, a Pinkerton security guard. Despite a breakdown in the video monitors at the local jail, two sheriff's deputies were issued two-day suspensions by Sheriff Ted Melvin for allowing the escape of Hill and Lewis. Reports indicate sheriff's detectives had searched the cell of Hill a couple of days before the escape, but were unable to find contraband.

Other escapes were made by John C. Cooper, 29, Terre Haute, who had been arrested for kidnap and rape; Billy W. Smith, 30, Terre Haute, who was charged with second degree burglary; Stan Stan Beatty, 24, who walked away

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HOMICIDE AND JAIL ESCAPES

from a work detail March 12, and Fred L. Christenberry, charged with safe burglary.

Other law enforcement stories during 1976 included:

—Gilbert E. Sandow, 46, and his wife, Mary A., 43, both of Springfield, Ohio, killed May 28 in a plane accident west of Terre Haute.

—Bobby LeRoy Vick, 23, Terre Haute, drowns in gravel pit north of city.

—Jackie E. Biddy, 5, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jerry A. Biddy, Terre Haute, choked to death when youth stuck his head outside a car window and window closed on boy's neck.

—Body of Cheryl Bolin, 11, Monrovia, found on southern Vigo County farm, a victim of kidnap and murder.

—Four persons, Robert B. Peterson, Stanley G. "Butch" Patton, Carl L. Todd, and Billy Thompson, all of Terre Haute, arrested on charges of arson in connection with several questionable local fires.

—Merchants Against Crime organize to fight local crime.

—Body of Illinois youth, David M. Niemann, found floating in Wabash River near Fairbanks Park.

—Terre Haute man, Tommy Ferree, beaten at home and city police arrest three persons.

—Nine persons arrested in excise raid at Mr. Boo nightclub, 488 N. 3rd St.

—Edith Hoopengartner, accused killer of her husband, Roy A. Hoopengartner, Sept. 29, 1975, dies as a result of suicide.

—Richard Majors, 27, arrested for April 28 armed robbery at Bohannon's East Package Liquor Store, slain in shoot-out in Indianapolis.

—Marsha Guingrich, 19, a dropout at Indiana State University and who was charged with the shooting death of an ISU Student Health Center counselor, Dr. William J. Carson, discharged from Indiana Department of Mental Health where she had been committed.

—West Terre Haute police stage one-day walkout following protest against town board.

Local murders, unsolved

by Howard Stevens

Pam, Pixie Vicki are eye catching names but their deaths remain mysteries: unsolved murders at our backdoor.

Pamela Milam, 19, a sophomore at Indiana State University, was active in her sorority, Sigma Kappa, and was pursuing an elementary education degree when her body was found Sept. 16, 1972 in the trunk of her car parked on the ISU campus. Making the grisly discovery was her father, Charles, who found his daughter's crumpled body. She had been strangled and rope was found tied around her neck and wrists and tape placed over her mouth.

A 1971 graduate of Honey Creek High School, where she was a member of the National Honor Society, Pamela had worked full-time at the Southland Branch of the Emeline Fairbanks Public Library. After 12 years, the slaying of the popular coed continues to puzzle police.

Six years later, Mary Beth "Pixie" Grismore, 26, disappeared from her home at Marshall, Indiana, February 22, 1978. Ten weeks later, her partially decomposed body was found stuffed in the trunk of her car near a Columbus, Ohio motel. Sheriff Mike Eslinger, Rockville, says the case is as baffling today as the day it happened.

Friends of the victim say Pixie could do it all. She was a runnerup in the Miss Iowa pageant and she could sing, dance and act. She was described as "witty, beautiful and a delight to know."

Mrs. Gilmore had been in Terre Haute the night before her disappearance with two girl friends on a going away outing before Pixie

returned to Iowa with her new husband. The trio had dinner, went to a movie and danced for a couple of hours at a popular northside Terre Haute night spot. The movie, ironically, was "Looking for Mr. Goodbar," a film in which the female lead was murdered.

At one point, a clairvoint was brought in to see if she could shed any light on the case. A reward of \$5,000 was offered by the parents for information leading to her whereabouts.

Indiana State Police Detective Loyd Heck said photographs of the knotted rope were sent to police departments across the country to determine if the method of strangulation of Pixie was used in other cases. He said the knot is used by cattlemen and is included in Navy training manuals.

Vicki Lynn Harrell, 25, was murdered on her birthday in Owen County in 1973 and two letters, KN, were carved on her breast. Sheriff Bob Mason believed the petite young woman was murdered elsewhere and her body dumped on a county road east of Spencer.

"Vicki was a lively, fun-loving young woman. She met people easily and someplace, she met the wrong man or woman," Larry Incollingo, a newsman, wrote.

An autopsy revealed that Vicki Harrell was strangled with a rope no thicker than a man's finger and that she had been sexually molested before and after death. Found face down in a pool of blood and water, pathologists believe she had been dead at least 12 hours.

The victim's body was found near Concord Road east of Spencer along a scenic route that is flanked by small farms and rustic

fence rows that flirt with the highway's edge. She was murdered under a hunter's moon, a full moon which bathed the countryside in an eerie glow, authorities say.

Officers say they have few clues to the identity of the killer.

On June 24, 1967, Mrs. Joan Fox, 34, was criminally assaulted and brutally strangled in her apartment near the Indiana State University campus. More than 100 persons were questioned in the grisly murder and any new information on the case is still requested by Police Chief Gerald Loudermilk.

Two months after the murder, the apartment house in which the body was found was the scene of a fire. Only the rear portion of the building where the victim died was destroyed. The building was later demolished to make room for expansion at the university.

Although it was never brought out by police, Mrs. Fox, we learned, was suffocated by a pillow wielded by her killer. A blow to her temple by the slayer knocked her unconscious, detectives theorize. A bloody soft drink bottle was recovered from beneath the bed.

The young woman's body lies in an unmarked plot at Highland Lawn Cemetery. Few people ask to see her grave.

Authorities have not given up on any of the unsolved cases, and, in fact, other mysterious murders have followed. Officers ask for help with the promise of absolute anonymity to any and all informers.

"There is nothing to fear from cooperating with police. There is everything to fear if these killers are allowed to remain free."

MURDERS - UNSOLVED
(GENERAL)

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*Murders / Mustard, Ricky
Pickett, Tonya*

/Crime and Criminals (CV) - Murders

Stepdaughter, father found slain in home

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By Dave Delaney
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

BRAZIL — Police have no suspects in the Saturday morning shotgun murders of a Brazil man and his stepdaughter.

The bodies of Ricky Mustard, 32, and his stepdaughter, Tonja Pickett, 16, were found early Saturday morning by Chryl Mustard, Mustard's wife and Tonja's mother, when she returned home from work, Brazil detective Sgt. Roger Lindsay said. The family lived in a small, gray, one-story house at 110 W. Pinckley St., five blocks south of U.S. 40.

Police say the murders occurred sometime between 11:30 p.m. Friday and 1:40 a.m. Saturday, when Mrs. Mustard arrived home. Police won't say, however, how they've narrowed the time of death down to that two-hour period.

Mrs. Mustard called police at 1:41 a.m., and was later taken to Clay County Hospital and treated for shock, police said. She was released Saturday night and was reportedly staying with friends. Mrs. Mustard was questioned by police, but not thoroughly because of her emotional state, Lindsay said.

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Lindsay also said the dead girl is the great-niece of Brazil Mayor Norval Pickett Jr.

Chuck Pickett, Mrs. Mustard's former husband and natural father to Tonja Pickett, was at work in an Evansville business at the time of the shooting, police said.

Mustard and Tonja Pickett

were killed by single gunshot wounds to the head, fired at close range, Clay County Coroner Robert Miller said. Police believe the weapon used was a 12-gauge shotgun because a bullet casing from that type of weapon was found at the scene inside the house. Police would not say in which room the casing was found.

Miller also said Mustard was killed while sitting on the sofa in the living room, and the girl was found in the kitchen on the floor. Miller pronounced both dead at the scene.

Lindsay said the kitchen and living room are connected, and they make up most of the house.

Lindsay said there appeared to be no forced entry into the home. He confirmed that the home has a back door, but he refused to comment about whether he believed it to have been used or forced open during the slayings.

Sgt. Don Collins of the Indiana State Police confirmed that there was no sign of forced entry, but the home frequently was unlocked, he said.

"We can't tell if they [Mustard and Pickett] knew the killer," Lindsay said. "There were no signs of drugs, and there was no sign of a struggle." Nor was there evidence of robbery, the detective said.

The officer said they could not determine whether the house had been ransacked. "We don't know how she kept house," Lindsay said. Police expect to determine if the home was robbed or ransacked today when Mrs. Mustard is taken to the scene.

The television set in the home was still on when police arrived.

Lindsay said police have ques-

tioned neighbors about the incident, but he refused to release details about what police learned from talking with people in the area.

Four ISP investigators were sent to Brazil to work on the case with members of the Brazil City Police Department and Coroner Miller, a spokesman at the Indiana State Police post at Terre Haute said.

Mrs. Mustard works on an assembly line at Shenandoa Industry at Greencastle, which produces injected molding. She began work there Nov. 7, according to a supervisor at the plant.

"Thank God for her job," said

Sally Wood, a supervisor at Shenandoa Industry, upon learning of the two deaths in Brazil. Mrs. Mustard worked the second shift Friday, getting out at 1 a.m., said Wood, who is not Mrs. Mustard's supervisor.

Pickett was a junior at Northview High School.

"You're shocked when you hear of one of your students being killed," said James Buell, an administrator, teacher and coach at Northview High School. Buell said he had the teen-ager in school last year for a health class.

"She was a respectable student and contributed in class," Buell said. "She wasn't a troublemaker

and I saw her at a number of football games this fall."

Bobbi Wilson, a Brazil resident and first cousin of Ricky Mustard, said Mustard had been seriously injured within the past year after his motorcycle struck a tree.

"He wasn't working," said Wilson, noting part of Mustard's recovery was done in an Indianapolis hospital.

Robert Moore, a student of Clay County history, said he is not aware of another double homicide in Brazil. "I don't believe there has been one in my time," he said.

Staff reporter Kelly Porter assisted with this report.

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